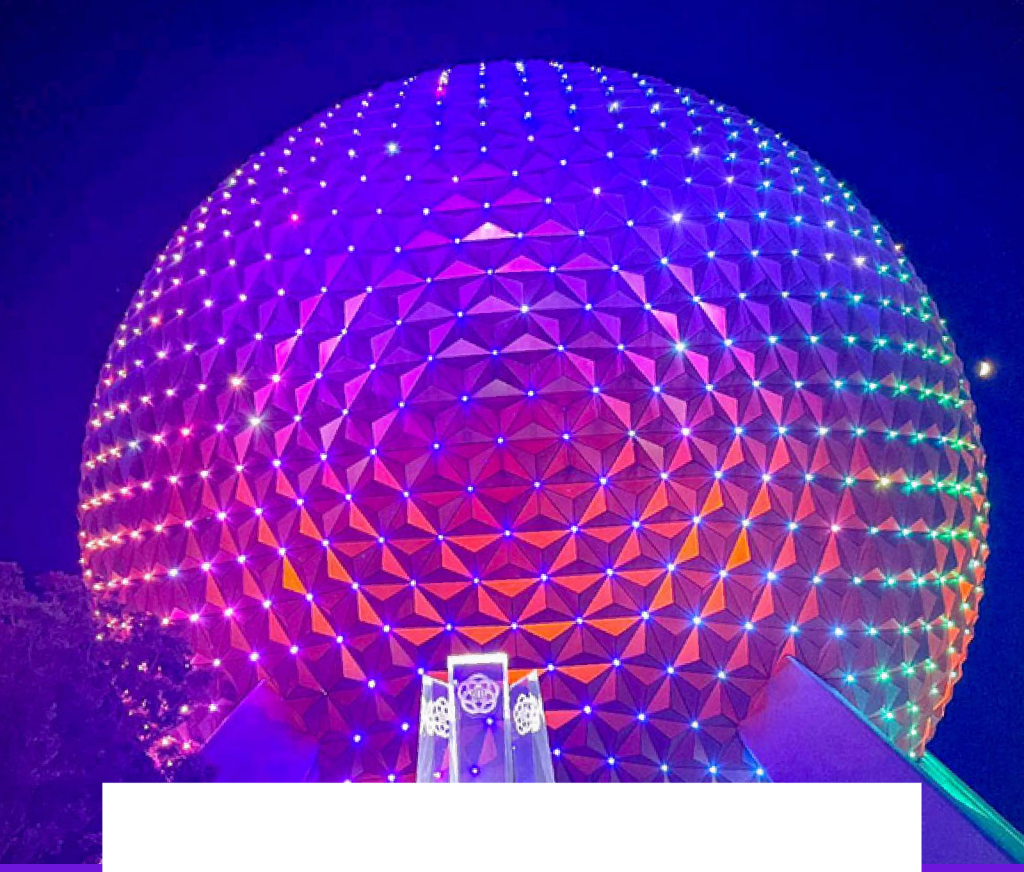

Festival Hacks

How to tackle any EPCOT festival

DISNEY FOOD BLOG

HOW TO TACKLE *EVERY* EPCOT FESTIVAL

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INTRODUCTION TO FESTIVALS AT EPCOT

EPCOT is a Disney park that stands out in many ways -- but one of the BIGGEST ways is through its seasonal festivals.

Throughout the year, EPCOT has four festivals: Festival of the Arts, Flower and Garden Festival, International Food and Wine Festival, and Festival of the Holidays. And along with the theming, these festivals all centralize around musical performances, exclusive activities, limited time merchandise, and (our personal favorite part) pop-up food booths serving tapas-sized eats.

Our goal with this guide? To help you succeed at any and all EPCOT festival, no matter which one you choose! We'll answer some of the most common festival questions we get, as well as set you up with a plan for success.

(Oh -- and don't forget to drop us a line after your festival day. We'd love to hear all about it!)

When do festivals happen?

A better question is, "When do festivals NOT happen?" There are only a few weeks out of the year when EPCOT festivals aren't going on (so make sure to check the online Disney World park calendar in advance so you don't miss out).

Do I need a separate ticket?

Nope! As long as you have a valid EPCOT theme park ticket (and a park pass reservation), then you're free to explore any of the festivals -- no extra admission necessary!

Can I mobile order at the fest booths?

Sorry, but no. If you want to try a food or beverage item at any of the festival booths, you're going to have to do things the old-fashioned way (AKA: stand in line and wait).

When do festival booths open?

Festival booths start to open when the World Showcase does (around 11 AM). So if you get to the park when it first opens (around 9 AM), then you'll need to kill time elsewhere (like on a ride)!

When is the best time to visit a festival?

The very first day and very last day of a festival are the most CROWDED times to visit. Weekends can also get packed too. But the middle of the fests in the middle of the week (M-Th) turns into a nice sweet-spot with fewer crowds!

BUDGETING

Although you're not going to need a separate festival ticket to access an EPCOT festival, you WILL need to set aside some extra money if you want to experience it to its fullest.

Aside from your park ticket, you'll find food items range between $4 - $10 (with alcoholic beverages costing more around $11+). Since the food options all come on smaller-sized plates, you'll probably want to grab 3-4 items (IF you're planning on making these items into a whole meal, that is -- otherwise you can grab a couple items to snack on throughout the day and call it good).

To keep track of your spending, consider loading a set amount of money onto a Disney gift card to use around the festival booths.

(Psst -- guess what? You'll be able to use Disney Dining Plan credits on festival foods again when this fan-favorite planning tool returns in 2024!)

Example lunch at Flower and Garden Festival

- Appetizer: Avocado Toast ($6)
- Entree: Taco Vampiro ($8.75)
- Entree: Spicy Chicken Gumbo ($6.25)
- Dessert: Orange Blossom-Saffron Cake ($5)
- Drink: Orange-Lemon Smoothie (Non-Alcoholic) + Souvenir Orange Bird Sipper ($15)
- Total: $41

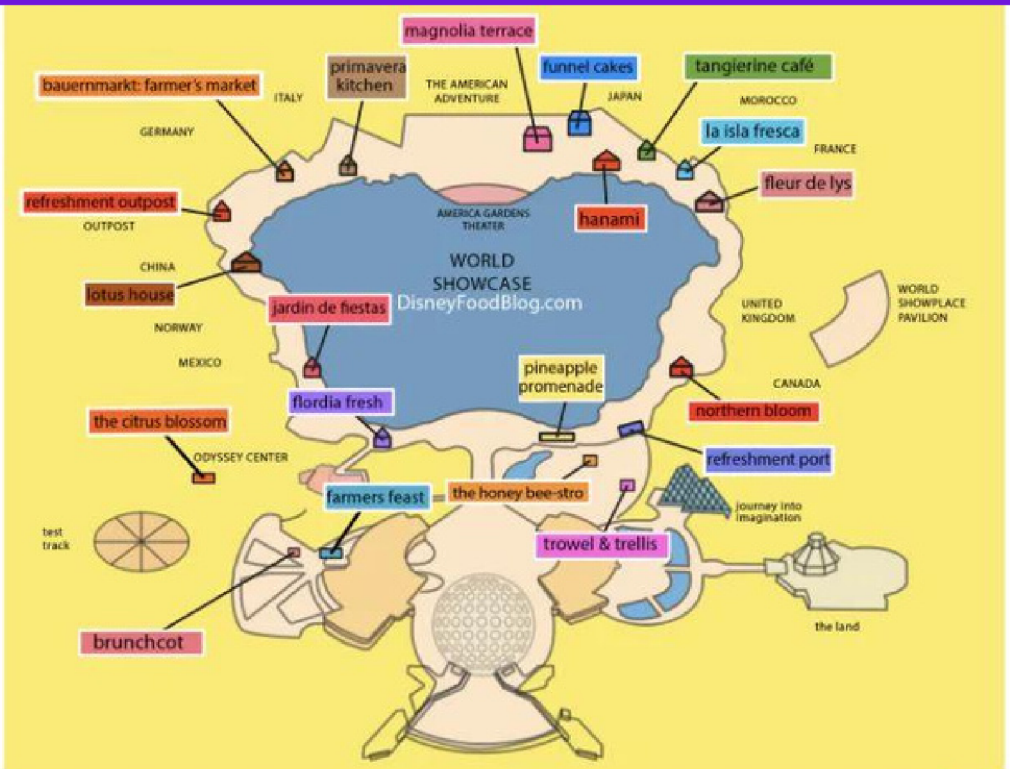
FESTIVAL GEAR

In order to be FULLY PREPARED for a successful EPCOT festival day, you're gonna need to bring a few important items along with you.

Like any other park day, you'll want to be prepared for the weather, so make sure you've got your **sunscreen, refillable water bottle, and sunglasses** on hand at all times.

An EPCOT festival happens rain or shine, so keep an **umbrella and/or poncho** in your bag, just in case. (Side note -- During particularly stormy times, food booths will have to close until the bulk of the rain passes by.)

Balancing multiple food items can be tricky, so consider buying a **food tray** at one of EPCOT's merch locations -- or bring one from home. (Don't own a food tray? Here's a cheap option you might want to consider!)



2023 Flower & Garden Festival

MAKE A PLAN

There are SO MANY different food booths to try at each EPCOT festival. (Food and Wine, alone, has nearly 200 sips and eats to choose from! Where do you even BEGIN?)

Make sure to look at our DFB food fest maps ahead of time (located on the DFB website) so you can start mapping out your must-eats -- and where they're located.

Park hopping to EPCOT for a late lunch or dinner is also a great way to maximize your festival time while still experiencing the other parks. (That way, you don't have to worry about accomplishing EVERYTHING in one day!)

KIDS AT FESTIVALS

There's something for EVERYBODY at the EPCOT festivals -- even for the kiddos! (Scratch that -- ESPECIALLY for the kiddos.)

Most of the EPCOT food booths have fun (and rather colorful) options that kids are going to get a kick out of. But if your kid has a strict diet of chicken tenders and french fries, here are a few quick services you can swing by beforehand. (That way YOU can keep taste-testing and they can stay fed, too. A win-win!)

- Connections Eatery (for pizza, chicken, burgers, and gourmet waffles)
- Sunshine Seasons (for a food court set up with multiple options)
- La Cantina San Angel (for tacos and chicken strips)
- Refreshment Outpost (for hot dogs and select specialty fest items)
- Regal Eagle (for BBQ and burgers)

Along with the food, consider picking up a specialty festival scavenger hunt card (that kids can complete around the pavilions) at one of EPCOT's main gift shop locations. Cards cost around $10 (and come with prizes)!

ENTERTAINMENT

There's MORE to the EPCOT festivals than just their food. (Whaa? Surely not.)

Here are a few different entertainment offerings you can find at each festival:

- Festival of the Arts has live painters, chalk art, and a giant paint-by-number mural
- Flower and Garden has character topiaries, a butterfly house, and an English Garden Tea Stroll
- Food and Wine USED to have specialty culinary seminars (that we're hoping they bring back in the future), but the main appeal of this fest is ALL the different food and drink pairings to choose from
- And Festival of the Holidays has holiday storytellers and holly-jolly entertainment aplenty

Each festival ALSO has its own food walk (located on the back of your complimentary festival passport you can pick up in the park), exclusive light show (which plays multiple times throughout the night across Spaceship Earth), and a concert series in the American Gardens Theater.

Dining Packages allow guests to pair lunch or dinner at a participating EPCOT Table Service restaurant and enjoy reserved seating for these festival concerts. (Or, in the case of Festival of the Holidays, you can reserve your seat for the HIGHLY-POPULAR Candlelight Processional instead.)

LET'S GO EXPLORE!

The EPCOT festivals are truly one of our FAVORITE parts of Disney World -- and we hope you feel the same!

If you want to learn more about ALL of the different food and drink offerings for each of the fests, make sure to check out our festival guides, over at dfbstore.com. We'd love to keep helping you plan and feel CONFIDENT about your upcoming EPCOT visit!